Pearson Edexcel

A level Music Technology

2022 Exemplar

9MT0/02 Technology Based Composition

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Resources you may want to support your session

9MT0/02 question paper

9MT0/02 logbook

Specification pages 21-33

Audio files of exemplar work

DAW software to import the stimulus video alongside the candidate audio

Aims and objectives

Receive feedback on the national performance of candidates in non-examined assessment task 2022 9MT0/02 technology based composition.

Consider why candidates were successful or unsuccessful in task 2022 9MT0/02 technology based composition.

See how the Principal Examiner assessed actual student work.

Read answers to frequently asked questions.

Changes to A level Music Technology for 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on many aspects of the teaching and learning experience, so we have had to make some changes while maintaining the integrity of the specification and retaining the value of the qualification as a whole.

Ofqual consulted stakeholders to decide what elements of the specification might need to be adjusted in light of the current situation.

The outcomes of the consultation were:

- Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) was retained
- demands on candidates was adjusted to take into account the loss of in-school time
- NEA requirements ensured that candidates were not disadvantaged due to any restrictions imposed on their in-school activities.

In response to the outcomes of the consultation, Ofqual published a document outlining what these adjustments would look like in A level Music Technology.

Summary of changes to 9MT0/02 Technology Based Composition

Standard specification requirements	**Revised requirements (for submission in May 2022)**
Length of composition must be 3 minutes	Length of composition must be 2 minutes

Composition length

The length of the composition was 2 minutes instead of 3 minutes. This was the only change to component 2. This change was made to reduce the demands on candidates and the length of time they need to spend using school equipment.

The mark scheme

No changes were made to the mark scheme. The composition needed to adhere to the new duration requirements and this was reflected in the marks for *Assessment grid 5 – Response to brief*.

Grade boundaries

2022 was a transition year to reflect that we were in a pandemic recovery period and candidates' education has been disrupted. In 2022 grade boundaries reflected a midway point between 2021 and 2019.

This approach recognised the disruption experienced by candidates taking exams in 2022 over their course of study, and so provided a safety net for those who might have otherwise just missed out on a higher grade. In 2022, results were higher than in 2019, but not as high as in 2020.

Candidate Z – Brief 3 – an outstanding candidate

Candidate Z is an outstanding candidate. This shows what is possible by a very dedicated candidate.

Logbook:

The logbook is excellent and clearly presented. It is exceptionally detailed reflecting the attention that the candidate has paid to their composition. A logbook of this quality really helps the examiner reward the work, particularly in AG1, AG2 and AG3.

Though not required, the candidate has written a paragraph about the aims of his composition in the title box. This shows that the candidate has thought about the meaning and message they want to get across when responding to the brief.

The synthesis table gives detail of synthesiser settings, edits and automation. Sometimes, there is explanation as to why these edits were made, e.g. Lead Synth/ES2. Each timbre has a name that indicates which timbre it is with a time reference, so examiners can easily identify it.

The sampling table shows in detail the old tech samples used and where they occur in the song with time references. There is detail on manipulation. As well as the old tech samples, there has been some vocal sampling.

The effects table gives detail of effects on the significant parts of the song. Instruments are listed with their effects and time references for easy identification by the examiner.

There are many screenshots which is acceptable. The screenshots are supported by detailed, yet concise accompanying notes. Some candidates merely include screenshots with no accompanying notes resulting in a logbook where the information is unfathomable.

The logbook credits the drummer and explains how the candidate composed the drum part to show the drummer what to play. In this case, the drum patterns and rhythm can be credited because the candidate wrote the drum part.

Candidate Z – Brief 3 – an outstanding candidate

Technology based composition:

The marks on the assessment grids can be seen on the following pages.

This is clearly an outstanding composition. Compositions of this quality are rare. Immediately when listening, examiners would be looking to give this composition top marks.

With AG1, AG2 and AG3, many candidates fall into the trap of thinking about quantity of synthesisers, sampling and effects rather than quality. In this composition, the three technology aspects aren't overcooked, but are used musically.

AG1. Synthesis. Although the use of synthesis is subtle, it's musical. Often candidates find it hard to blend heavily laden synthesiser presets with real instruments. With careful synth timbre programming, this composition musically layers the synthesisers to fit with the drums and guitars. The logbook provides evidence that the candidate has thought about this. Synth timbres are automated to give evolution to the textures. Full marks.

AG2. Sampling. The use of sampling is the most significant feature of this composition and has been inspired by "Money" by Pink Floyd. This is stated in the logbook and clearly audible in the composition with rhythmic loops made up from old tech samples. This approach was common in 2022, though this composition was one of the most successful. Tech samples seamlessly fade in and out of the texture and are musically woven into the rhythm track without cluttering the mix. Tech samples re-appear to remind us of the brief, e.g. subtly at 0:44 and more obviously at 0:55 where the texture thins to make space for the samples. The coda frames the music with a recapitulation of the opening tech samples plus a humorous "goodbye". Samples have been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette. Full marks.

AG3. Creative effects. The drums and guitars have mostly standard mixing techniques, but it's musically done; however, there is some creativity in the guitar effects. There are some automated reverbs which creatively add textural interest. The effects successfully create the sonic palette of the 70s rock that the candidate is emulating. The logbook supports the thought behind the use of effects. The effects use is excellent so worthy of the top band; however the use is more functional than creative which is why it scores 7 rather than 8.

AG4. Mix. The mix is slightly congested in places, a little muddy by modern standards, so not quite full marks in this criterion.

AG5. Response to brief. The samples have been musically woven into the fabric of the music throughout. The musical ideas are excellent throughout. Full marks.

AG6. Style and coherence. The prog rock style is successful throughout. This song wouldn't sound out of place on the radio. Sections flow musically into each other. "Stylistic conventions are used successfully throughout." Full marks.

Candidate Z – Brief 3 – an outstanding candidate

Technology based composition (continued):

The musical elements are all excellent and all score full marks:

AG7. Melody. There is a lot of melody composed by the candidate. There is a well-developed vocal part including a catchy chorus. Additionally, there is a stylish bass groove, a guitar solo and some great synth lead lines. “Melodies have shape, fluency and a sense of direction” with “constant development of musical ideas throughout”.

AG8. Harmony. The harmony in the chorus lifts the pace. The organ chords are idiomatically voiced. The voicing of the harmony backing vocals is “imaginative”.

AG9. Rhythm. There is a stylish syncopated groove between the bass and drums throughout. The groove breaks in the chorus to a more varied rhythm to lift the chorus. The drum part can be credited because the candidate wrote the drum part (according to the logbook). There is “consistent development throughout”.

AG10. Texture. There are a variety of textures suitable for the style, thinner in the verses and thicker in the choruses. The layering of the parts is musical. Despite some sections having many layers, the texture is not cluttered because parts complement each other. “Texture is well handled throughout with variety and development”.

AG11. Form and structure. The composition is in a type of song form but shortened for the 2 minute brief. There is a clear chorus with a musical textural lift. The sections musically link together with bridges. “Structure is well handled throughout with variety and development”.

The mark total of 58 would score an A* grade.

Candidate Z – Brief 3 – an outstanding candidate

Assessment grids:

AG1

Synthesis – designing own sounds, and manipulating using automation or real-time control of LFO, filter, envelopes.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – synthesis	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of synthesis techniques • Synthesis use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of synthesis techniques • Use of synthesis is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of synthesis techniques • Use of synthesis is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of synthesis techniques throughout • Synthesis has been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	8

Comments:

Detailed automation throughout to help the textures evolve.

1

Candidate Z – Brief 3 – an outstanding candidate

Assessment grids:

AG2

Sampling – using short audio files to develop new sonic elements; pitch-mapping, cutting/trimming, looping.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – sampling	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of sampling techniques • Sample use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of sampling techniques • Sample use is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of sampling techniques • Sample use is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of sampling techniques throughout • Samples have been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	8

Comments:

Samples well integrated into the rhythm.

AG3

Creative effects – adding effects or processors to modify existing sounds; control of parameters.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – creative effects	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of creative effects techniques throughout • Creative effects have been used imaginatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	7

Comments:

Good effects most parts. Tasteful guitar distortion, some effective vocal processing.

2

Candidate Z – Brief 3 – an outstanding candidate

Assessment grids:

AG4

Editing of mix must consider processing and balance to include stereo, EQ, dynamics, mix effects, master level, top and tail.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds Editing of mix – control of processing and balance	Mark
	0	No rewardable material. Parts missing or inaudible	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing editing of mix • Handling of processing and balance is limited	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing editing of mix • Handling of processing and balance is mostly successful	
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent editing of mix • All aspects of processing and balance are handled successfully throughout	5

Comments:

Good clear mix. Elements all audible. Warm by modern standards, but this is stylistic for the style of the song. Slightly congested in places.

AG5

Marking instructions
No higher than level 2 will be awarded if the submission is longer than the required length.

Level	Mark	Structure sounds Response to brief – sonic and musical ideas combined to reflect the requirements of the brief	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing combination of sonic and musical ideas • Sonic and musical ideas are limited in meeting the requirements of the brief	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing combination of sonic and musical ideas • Sonic and musical ideas mostly meet the requirements of the brief	
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent combination of sonic and musical ideas • All aspects of the brief are successfully reflected throughout	6

Comments:

Samples excellently woven into the fabric of the music. Lyrics reflect the meaning of how the samples have been used. Imaginative.

AG6

Level	Mark	Structure sounds Style and coherence – use of stylistic conventions and control of flow and direction of ideas	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing flow and direction to the piece • Use of stylistic conventions is limited	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing flow and direction to the piece • Use of stylistic conventions is mostly successful	
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent flow and direction to the piece • Stylistic conventions are used successfully throughout	6

Comments:

Follows a shortened song structure. Sections well linked.

3

Candidate Z – Brief 3 – an outstanding candidate

Assessment grids:

For the following five assessment grids, all will be assessed but only the three highest marks will be used to calculate the total.

AG7

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – melody	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive melodic ideas • Melodies are underdeveloped and lack shape, fluency and direction	
Level 2	3–4	• Melodic ideas are developed in some places • Melodies are generally effective but may lack shape, fluency or direction	
Level 3	5–6	• Consistent development of melodic ideas throughout • Melodies have shape, fluency and a sense of direction	6

Comments:

Variety in the vox melodies. Lead guitar solo. Bass line groove.

AG8

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – harmony	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or misjudged harmonic ideas • Harmonies are underdeveloped and lack variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Harmonic ideas are mostly suitable • Harmonies are functional and show some development	
Level 3	5–6	• Harmonic ideas are imaginative • Harmony is well handled throughout with variety and development	6

Comments:

Musical backing vox. Harmonic choices effective.

AG9

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – rhythm	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive rhythmic ideas • Rhythms are underdeveloped and lack shape, fluency and direction	
Level 2	3–4	• Rhythmic ideas are developed in some places • Rhythms are generally effective but may lack shape, fluency or direction	
Level 3	5–6	• Consistent development of rhythmic ideas throughout • Rhythms have shape, fluency and a sense of direction	6

Comments:

Excellent integration of samples to form the rhythm.

5

Candidate Z – Brief 3 – an outstanding candidate

Assessment grids:

AG10

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – texture	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or misjudged use of texture • Texture is underdeveloped and lacks variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Use of texture is mostly suitable • Texture is functional and shows some development	
Level 3	5–6	• Use of texture is imaginative • Texture is well handled throughout with variety and development	6

Comments:

All elements woven into the texture with shifts making way for the spoken samples.

AG11

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – form and structure	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive structural ideas • Structure is underdeveloped and lacks variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Structural ideas are mostly suitable • Structure is functional and shows some development	
Level 3	5–6	• Structural ideas are imaginative • Structure is well handled throughout with variety and development	6

Comments:

Well handled throughout.

TOTAL for Component (60)	58

6

Candidate Y – Brief 3 – a borderline A/B grade candidate

Logbook:

Although the logbook states brief 2, the composition is clearly brief 3 and assessed as brief 3. There is no poem in the composition and the music sounds like old technology. The composition title alludes to brief 3.

This type of logbook is something that examiners see too frequently. It's too long at 84 pages. It contains pages and pages of screenshots with no explanation. Fortunately, the instrument names are given so there is some inkling of what the screenshots are for. An examiner cannot gain information from this logbook to credit the editing work the candidate has done. This logbook is of similar usefulness as a blank logbook.

Most of the samples are drum sounds but the source of these isn't clear – are they from old tech to fulfil the brief?

According to the logbook, there is what sounds like samples from old computer games, but these appear in the Creative Effects section making it harder for the examiner to check response to brief. Furthermore, there are effects and EQ in the sampling section adding to the confusion. In the final section it says the vocal samples are self-recorded. It's not clear what editing has been done to the samples because it's just screenshots.

The final ten or so pages of the logbook are pages from promotional material from software that the candidate used. The front of the logbook states, "Do not attach additional material".

Candidate Y – Brief 3 – a borderline A/B grade candidate

Technology based composition:

The marks on the assessment grids can be seen on the following pages.

The candidate has submitted an aifc file instead of wav, but it can still be assessed. Candidates should check their files play back as expected.

This composition responds well to the brief. Through the use of modern DAW technology, the composition emulates the soundscape of old technology.

AG1. Synthesis. Synthesis has been well used to recreate the sounds of 1980s chiptunes. It's unclear from the logbook as to how much editing the candidate has completed themselves. The descriptor of, "Use of synthesis is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall" is accurate. The synthesis is closer to an original sonic palette in level 4 (80s chiptune) than misjudged in level 2, so it scored 6 marks.

AG2. Sampling. The use of the vocal phrases, although self-recorded would count as samples for AG2 because they are short clips and have been edited to fit the story of the composition. There are some fight game samples. This is the most evident use of sampling. The sampling referred to in the logbook, i.e. drum sounds, is not clear what the candidate has done. Are the drums from old tech or just a plug-in drum machine? The vocal samples make a "positive contribution" to the narrative of the composition, so 6 marks.

AG3. Creative effects. Again, it is hard to work out what the candidate has done without accompanying notes in the logbook. There are some grainy sounding effects to help create the old tech soundscape, but effects are less of a feature than sampling and synthesis. Stereo is used well to separate the synth lines. 5 marks.

AG4. Mix. The mix isn't that clear. The vocal samples sound muffled and don't always sit with the brighter synths. The ending is abrupt, almost cut. 4 marks.

AG5. Response to brief. There are samples that emulate old tech, though it's unclear from the logbook of their exact source, so it's unclear whether there are actually 6 samples of old tech. The composition is too long at 2:06 (excluding the silence at the end) therefore a maximum of 4 marks is available anyway.

AG6. Style and coherence. The structure works well to show progression through an old tech computer game and the style is a 1980s computer game style. It's quite repetitive though. 4 marks.

Candidate Y – Brief 3 – a borderline A/B grade candidate

Technology based composition (continued):

The musical elements are all similarly scored because of the repetitive nature of the composition:

AG7. Melody. There are a lot of synthesiser melodies layered but it's quite repetitive. 4 Marks.

AG8. Harmony. The harmony is "functional" but "repetitive". 3 Marks.

AG9. Rhythm. The rhythm consistently develops, and the fast pace drives the composition. 5 marks.

AG10. Texture. There are some textural contrasts when layers drop in and out, but it's largely uniform in nature. 4 marks.

AG11. Form and structure. There is some evolution through the music with some sense of sections. Overall, it's quite repetitive. 4 marks.

The mark total of 42 would have been a B grade, one mark off an A grade in 2022. However, note that the grades were more generous in 2022 than 2019 by about a grade at the A/B boundary.

Candidate Y – Brief 3 – a borderline A/B grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG1

Synthesis – designing own sounds, and manipulating using automation or real-time control of LFO, filter, envelopes.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – synthesis	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of synthesis techniques • Synthesis use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of synthesis techniques • Use of synthesis is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of synthesis techniques • Use of synthesis is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	6
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of synthesis techniques throughout • Synthesis has been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

Synth sounds reflect the 8 bit brief.

1

Candidate Y – Brief 3 – a borderline A/B grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG2

Sampling – using short audio files to develop new sonic elements; pitch-mapping, cutting/trimming, looping.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – sampling	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of sampling techniques • Sample use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of sampling techniques • Sample use is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of sampling techniques • Sample use is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	6
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of sampling techniques throughout • Samples have been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

Not clear from logbook what the candidate has done because just screenshots. Some reasonably placed sound effects from that sound like computer games. Good structural cues.

AG3

Creative effects – adding effects or processors to modify existing sounds; control of parameters.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – creative effects	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	5
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of creative effects techniques throughout • Creative effects have been used imaginatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

FX ok. Some grainy sounding FX suit stimulus. Good use of stereo to separate parts.

Candidate Y – Brief 3 – a borderline A/B grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG4

Editing of mix must consider processing and balance to include stereo, EQ, dynamics, mix effects, master level, top and tail.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds Editing of mix – control of processing and balance	Mark
	0	No rewardable material. Parts missing or inaudible	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing editing of mix • Handling of processing and balance is limited	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing editing of mix • Handling of processing and balance is mostly successful	4
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent editing of mix • All aspects of processing and balance are handled successfully throughout	

Comments:

Full sounding mix, but not always clear. Cut sounding unmusical end.

AG5

Marking instructions
No higher than level 2 will be awarded if the submission is longer than the required length.

Level	Mark	Structure sounds Response to brief – sonic and musical ideas combined to reflect the requirements of the brief	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing combination of sonic and musical ideas • Sonic and musical ideas are limited in meeting the requirements of the brief	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing combination of sonic and musical ideas • Sonic and musical ideas mostly meet the requirements of the brief	4
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent combination of sonic and musical ideas • All aspects of the brief are successfully reflected throughout	

Comments:

6 seconds too long therefore max 4.
(Check marking instructions above)

AG6

Level	Mark	Structure sounds Style and coherence – use of stylistic conventions and control of flow and direction of ideas	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing flow and direction to the piece • Use of stylistic conventions is limited	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing flow and direction to the piece • Use of stylistic conventions is mostly successful	4
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent flow and direction to the piece • Stylistic conventions are used successfully throughout	

Comments:

Quite repetitive. Some sense of direction and urgency. Progresses through the rounds of the game.

3

Candidate Y – Brief 3 – a borderline A/B grade candidate

Assessment grids:

For the following five assessment grids, all will be assessed but only the three highest marks will be used to calculate the total.

AG7

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – melody	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive melodic ideas • Melodies are underdeveloped and lack shape, fluency and direction	
Level 2	3–4	• Melodic ideas are developed in some places • Melodies are generally effective but may lack shape, fluency or direction	4
Level 3	5–6	• Consistent development of melodic ideas throughout • Melodies have shape, fluency and a sense of direction	

Comments:

Melodies suit the stimulus but too repetitive.

AG8

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – harmony	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or misjudged harmonic ideas • Harmonies are underdeveloped and lack variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Harmonic ideas are mostly suitable • Harmonies are functional and show some development	3
Level 3	5–6	• Harmonic ideas are imaginative • Harmony is well handled throughout with variety and development	

Comments:

Some development, but lacking enough variety.

AG9

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – rhythm	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive rhythmic ideas • Rhythms are underdeveloped and lack shape, fluency and direction	
Level 2	3–4	• Rhythmic ideas are developed in some places • Rhythms are generally effective but may lack shape, fluency or direction	
Level 3	5–6	• Consistent development of rhythmic ideas throughout • Rhythms have shape, fluency and a sense of direction	5

Comments:

Generally effective but consistent development also.

Candidate Y – Brief 3 – a borderline A/B grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG10

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – texture	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or misjudged use of texture • Texture is underdeveloped and lacks variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Use of texture is mostly suitable • Texture is functional and shows some development	4
Level 3	5–6	• Use of texture is imaginative • Texture is well handled throughout with variety and development	

Comments:

Functional, although textures rise and fall somewhat in conjunction with implied game action.

AG11

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – form and structure	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive structural ideas • Structure is underdeveloped and lacks variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Structural ideas are mostly suitable • Structure is functional and shows some development	4
Level 3	5–6	• Structural ideas are imaginative • Structure is well handled throughout with variety and development	

Comments:

Functional with some development. Repetitive at times.

TOTAL for Component (60)	42

Candidate X – Brief 2 – a D/E grade candidate

Logbook:

This logbook is similar to candidate Y, but not as long.

The title of the composition sounds like a humorous ode to why the logbook is less successful!

The synthesis is a list of settings, so it may as well have been screenshots which might have been quicker for the candidate to fill in.

Sampling and Creative Effects are screenshots with little explanation. There is some explanation about the vocal sampling and manipulation.

Candidate X – Brief 2 – a D/E grade candidate

Technology based composition:

The marks on the assessment grids can be seen on the following pages.

This composition responds to the brief but there not enough use of the poem. The elements of music technology are used, but not particularly musically. There is some good melody, but the piece isn't in any particular style. The structure wanders with no clear aim.

AG1. Synthesis. There is "competent" use of synthesis, however it's not a "significant feature of the composition". 4 marks.

AG2. Sampling. There are some vocal samples placed to create rhythmic loops. There is some pitch shifting of vocal samples. Although "sample use is evident", it is musically "misjudged". 4 marks.

AG3. Creative effects. Out of the three technology criteria, effects is the least used. Creative effects are "evident" but "do not make a significant contribution to the piece". There are some vocal delays and some general reverb on the instruments. 3 marks.

AG4. Mix. Although the mix is quite clear and the parts are audible, there isn't much complexity to the mix to credit. Sometimes the vocal dynamics are wild, e.g. 1:25. 3 marks.

AG5. Response to brief. There are only a few words used from the poem. The music doesn't reflect the meaning of the words. The brief has been responded to but only in a "limited" way. 2 marks.

AG6. Style and coherence. "Use of stylistic conventions is limited", the composition is not in a clearly identifiable style and the structure wanders with little direction. 2 marks.

The musical elements are all similarly scored 2-3:
AG7. Melody. Melody is the strongest element to this composition because there is quite a lot written, but it "lacks direction". 3 marks.

AG8. Harmony. Similarly to melody, the harmony lacks direction. 3 marks.

AG9. Rhythm. The rhythm is mostly quite basic. The rhythmic use of the vocal samples is credited. 3 marks.

AG10. Texture. "Misjudged" texture, e.g. loud tom hits at 1:33 onwards with little variety or development. 2 marks.

AG11. Form and structure. The sections don't link with aim and direction. 2 marks.

The mark total of 27 would have been just about a D grade in 2022. However, note that the grades were more generous in 2022 than 2019 by over a grade in E and D grades.

Candidate X – Brief 2 – a D/E grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG1

Synthesis – designing own sounds, and manipulating using automation or real-time control of LFO, filter, envelopes.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – synthesis	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of synthesis techniques • Synthesis use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of synthesis techniques • Use of synthesis is evident but with some misjudgements	4
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of synthesis techniques • Use of synthesis is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of synthesis techniques throughout • Synthesis has been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

Synthesis is evident, but not extensive.

1

Candidate X – Brief 2 – a D/E grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG2

Sampling – using short audio files to develop new sonic elements; pitch-mapping, cutting/trimming, looping.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – sampling	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of sampling techniques • Sample use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of sampling techniques • Sample use is evident but with some misjudgements	4
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of sampling techniques • Sample use is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of sampling techniques throughout • Samples have been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

Some good rhythmic and sonic ideas at times.

AG3

Creative effects – adding effects or processors to modify existing sounds; control of parameters.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – creative effects	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is evident but with some misjudgements	3
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of creative effects techniques throughout • Creative effects have been used imaginatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

Some effective delays.

Candidate X – Brief 2 – a D/E grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG4

Editing of mix must consider processing and balance to include stereo, EQ, dynamics, mix effects, master level, top and tail.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds Editing of mix – control of processing and balance	Mark
	0	No rewardable material. Parts missing or inaudible	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing editing of mix • Handling of processing and balance is limited	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing editing of mix • Handling of processing and balance is mostly successful	3
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent editing of mix • All aspects of processing and balance are handled successfully throughout	

Comments:

Samples not particularly well integrated.
Mostly clear, weak low end. Stereo very wide in places.

AG5

Marking instructions
No higher than level 2 will be awarded if the submission is longer than the required length.

Level	Mark	Structure sounds Response to brief – sonic and musical ideas combined to reflect the requirements of the brief	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing combination of sonic and musical ideas • Sonic and musical ideas are limited in meeting the requirements of the brief	2
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing combination of sonic and musical ideas • Sonic and musical ideas mostly meet the requirements of the brief	
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent combination of sonic and musical ideas • All aspects of the brief are successfully reflected throughout	

Comments:

Limited reflection of the brief, little effective use of given text.

AG6

Level	Mark	Structure sounds Style and coherence – use of stylistic conventions and control of flow and direction of ideas	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing flow and direction to the piece • Use of stylistic conventions is limited	2
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing flow and direction to the piece • Use of stylistic conventions is mostly successful	
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent flow and direction to the piece • Stylistic conventions are used successfully throughout	

Comments:

Quite repetitive and lacking in direction.

3

Candidate X – Brief 2 – a D/E grade candidate

Assessment grids:

For the following five assessment grids, all will be assessed but only the three highest marks will be used to calculate the total.

AG7

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – melody	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive melodic ideas • Melodies are underdeveloped and lack shape, fluency and direction	
Level 2	3–4	• Melodic ideas are developed in some places • Melodies are generally effective but may lack shape, fluency or direction	3
Level 3	5–6	• Consistent development of melodic ideas throughout • Melodies have shape, fluency and a sense of direction	

Comments:

Some interesting ideas, but lacking in shape and direction.

AG8

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – harmony	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or misjudged harmonic ideas • Harmonies are underdeveloped and lack variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Harmonic ideas are mostly suitable • Harmonies are functional and show some development	3
Level 3	5–6	• Harmonic ideas are imaginative • Harmony is well handled throughout with variety and development	

Comments:

Suitable, lacking direction and significant development. Some interesting moments.

AG9

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – rhythm	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive rhythmic ideas • Rhythms are underdeveloped and lack shape, fluency and direction	
Level 2	3–4	• Rhythmic ideas are developed in some places • Rhythms are generally effective but may lack shape, fluency or direction	3
Level 3	5–6	• Consistent development of rhythmic ideas throughout • Rhythms have shape, fluency and a sense of direction	

Comments:

Some variety in rhythmic sample use. Quite basic in many parts.

Candidate X – Brief 2 – a D/E grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG10

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – texture	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or misjudged use of texture • Texture is underdeveloped and lacks variety	2
Level 2	3–4	• Use of texture is mostly suitable • Texture is functional and shows some development	
Level 3	5–6	• Use of texture is imaginative • Texture is well handled throughout with variety and development	

Comments:

Little variation and slightly misjudged.

AG11

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – form and structure	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive structural ideas • Structure is underdeveloped and lacks variety	2
Level 2	3–4	• Structural ideas are mostly suitable • Structure is functional and shows some development	
Level 3	5–6	• Structural ideas are imaginative • Structure is well handled throughout with variety and development	

Comments:

Lacking structural consistency. Disjointed transitions.

TOTAL for Component (60)	27

6

Candidate W – Brief 1 – an A grade candidate

This candidate is included because it's a film brief.

Logbook:

This logbook has no screenshots which is acceptable. It has detailed accounts of synthesis, sampling and effects. There are some timing references for the effects, e.g. "reversed ending". It would be better if all items had timings in minutes and seconds so that the examiner can easily identify the feature.

This logbook is particularly useful to understand where many of the melodic elements have come from, e.g. the clarinet solo.

This logbook is useful for crediting the processing.

Candidate W – Brief 1 – an A grade candidate

Technology based composition:

The marks on the assessment grids can be seen on the following pages.

This composition responds to the brief well by synchronising with the film. There are musically different sections for the different parts of the film. This composition contains a lot of melodic parts, but these weren't all written by the candidate, but can still be credited texturally/technologically.

AG1. Synthesis. The synth timbres musically complement each other. There is some editing of synth timbres that reflect the action, e.g. robots, outlined in the log. The palette is closer to imaginative than inconsistent so 6 marks.

AG2. Sampling. Most of the samples are musical in nature, e.g. melodic lines like the clarinet. These samples are integrated into the composition musically with pitch/tempo manipulation. With samples like this, the logbook is useful to determine that the examiner can credit the manipulation work, otherwise the examiner would not know that the melody is sampled and the candidate went to effort to make it fit the music. 6 marks.

AG3. Creative effects. Out of the three technology criteria, effects is the least used. The reverse slowed down outro would be credited in sampling although it appears in effects in the logbook. 5 marks.

AG4. Mix. The mix is clear enough and well balanced. 5 marks.

AG5. Response to brief. With the film brief, on the first listen, the examiner would listen through to the composition watching the film to determine how well the music fits the action. In subsequent listens, the examiner turns the film off so as not to be unduly distracted by the film so that other criteria can be assessed. This composition follows the main cues in the film well with mood changes that reflect the action. The "musical ideas" would need to be better for further credit. 5 marks.

AG6. Style and coherence. The electro-jazzy style is mostly maintained throughout, though the style does chop and change a little too much. The sections link well with the film. 5 marks.

The musical elements are all similarly scored 4-5:
AG7. Melody. There is a lot of stylish melody written by the candidate for the synthesiser timbres. Some of the melody, e.g. clarinet solo, cannot be fully credited because it's formed from a sample. 5 marks.

AG8. Harmony. The harmony is well voiced throughout with changes of tonality. Musical. 5 marks.

AG9. Rhythm. The parts groove well together, however the drum parts are a little basic/mechanical, e.g. the swing section. The guitar rhythms cannot be credited because they are not the candidate's work. 4 marks.

AG10. Texture. Texture works musically with parts complementing each other, but not that imaginative. 4 marks.

AG11. Form and structure. The form follows the film in different sections. Sections could be better linked. 4 marks.

Candidate W – Brief 1 – an A grade candidate

Technology based composition (continued):

The mark total of 46 would have been an A grade in 2022. However, note that the grades were more generous in 2022 than 2019 by about a grade for the As and Bs.

Candidate W – Brief 1 – an A grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG1

Synthesis – designing own sounds, and manipulating using automation or real-time control of LFO, filter, envelopes.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – synthesis	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of synthesis techniques • Synthesis use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of synthesis techniques • Use of synthesis is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of synthesis techniques • Use of synthesis is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	6
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of synthesis techniques throughout • Synthesis has been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

Some manipulation and development of timbres but not extensive.

1

Candidate W – Brief 1 – an A grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG2

Sampling – using short audio files to develop new sonic elements; pitch-mapping, cutting/trimming, looping.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – sampling	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of sampling techniques • Sample use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of sampling techniques • Sample use is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of sampling techniques • Sample use is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	6
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of sampling techniques throughout • Samples have been used creatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

Range of samples successfully manipulated and used musically, slightly misjudged in places.

AG3

Creative effects – adding effects or processors to modify existing sounds; control of parameters.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds – creative effects	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited use of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is ineffective and does not make a significant contribution to the piece overall	
Level 2	3–4	• Inconsistent use of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is evident but with some misjudgements	
Level 3	5–6	• Competent use of a range of creative effects techniques • Creative effects use is evident and makes a positive contribution to the piece overall	5
Level 4	7–8	• Excellent use of a range of creative effects techniques throughout • Creative effects have been used imaginatively with a high level of skill and control to develop an original sonic palette	

Comments:

Used to develop timbres.

Candidate W – Brief 1 – an A grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG4

Editing of mix must consider processing and balance to include stereo, EQ, dynamics, mix effects, master level, top and tail.

Level	Mark	Create and edit sounds Editing of mix – control of processing and balance	Mark
	0	No rewardable material. Parts missing or inaudible	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing editing of mix • Handling of processing and balance is limited	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing editing of mix • Handling of processing and balance is mostly successful	
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent editing of mix • All aspects of processing and balance are handled successfully throughout	5

Comments:

A few small balance issues, congested EQ in the middle sections.

AG5

Marking instructions
No higher than level 2 will be awarded if the submission is longer than the required length.

Level	Mark	Structure sounds Response to brief – sonic and musical ideas combined to reflect the requirements of the brief	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing combination of sonic and musical ideas • Sonic and musical ideas are limited in meeting the requirements of the brief	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing combination of sonic and musical ideas • Sonic and musical ideas mostly meet the requirements of the brief	
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent combination of sonic and musical ideas • All aspects of the brief are successfully reflected throughout	5

Comments:

Very good response to brief. Integrates well with scenes and timings.

AG6

Level	Mark	Structure sounds Style and coherence – use of stylistic conventions and control of flow and direction of ideas	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Unconvincing flow and direction to the piece • Use of stylistic conventions is limited	
Level 2	3–4	• Generally convincing flow and direction to the piece • Use of stylistic conventions is mostly successful	
Level 3	5–6	• Excellent flow and direction to the piece • Stylistic conventions are used successfully throughout	5

Comments:

Mix of styles not always convincing.

Candidate W – Brief 1 – an A grade candidate

Assessment grids:

For the following five assessment grids, all will be assessed but only the three highest marks will be used to calculate the total.

AG7

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – melody	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive melodic ideas • Melodies are underdeveloped and lack shape, fluency and direction	
Level 2	3–4	• Melodic ideas are developed in some places • Melodies are generally effective but may lack shape, fluency or direction	5
Level 3	5–6	• Consistent development of melodic ideas throughout • Melodies have shape, fluency and a sense of direction	

Comments:

No credit for unaltered melodic elements from samples and bass player. Other parts are well crafted.

AG8

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – harmony	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or misjudged harmonic ideas • Harmonies are underdeveloped and lack variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Harmonic ideas are mostly suitable • Harmonies are functional and show some development	
Level 3	5–6	• Harmonic ideas are imaginative • Harmony is well handled throughout with variety and development	5

Comments:

Harmony well structured throughout with some stylistic writing. Switches in tonality very effective.

AG9

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – rhythm	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive rhythmic ideas • Rhythms are underdeveloped and lack shape, fluency and direction	
Level 2	3–4	• Rhythmic ideas are developed in some places • Rhythms are generally effective but may lack shape, fluency or direction	4
Level 3	5–6	• Consistent development of rhythmic ideas throughout • Rhythms have shape, fluency and a sense of direction	

Comments:

Good feel, although rhythmic programming perhaps a little basic in some parts.

Candidate W – Brief 1 – an A grade candidate

Assessment grids:

AG10

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – texture	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or misjudged use of texture • Texture is underdeveloped and lacks variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Use of texture is mostly suitable • Texture is functional and shows some development	4
Level 3	5–6	• Use of texture is imaginative • Texture is well handled throughout with variety and development	

Comments:

Some textural contrast between sections.

AG11

Level	Mark	Structure sounds – form and structure	Mark
	0	No rewardable material	
Level 1	1–2	• Limited or repetitive structural ideas • Structure is underdeveloped and lacks variety	
Level 2	3–4	• Structural ideas are mostly suitable • Structure is functional and shows some development	4
Level 3	5–6	• Structural ideas are imaginative • Structure is well handled throughout with variety and development	

Comments:

Clear sections with some continuity in ideas.

TOTAL for Component (60)	46

6

Frequently Asked Questions for the standard task in 2023

For brief 1, should candidates submit a video file containing the video and soundtrack?

No. All submissions must be wav files. When examiners assess the video composition, on their first listen they watch the video in sync with the composition to check if the cues have been hit. On subsequent listens they listen to the composition without the distraction of the visuals which could unfairly (against candidates that did briefs 2 and 3) positively affect the mark.

For brief 1, why does the question paper say that candidates "must not include Foley soundtrack or dialogue"?

The reason that the question paper states that candidates "must not include Foley soundtrack or dialogue" is because only the music is assessed. In previous years, examiners have found that candidates sometimes try to re-create dialogue from the original film (especially if there are actors talking). This is less of an issue in 2022 because the film isn't a storyline with actors. Examiners don't want the candidates to spend their time re-creating the dialogue needlessly. We would like the candidates to spend their time creating the music.

For brief 2, can students use a recording of the poet reading the poem?

It is acceptable for students to either use a recording of the original poet if available, or to record their own vocals. Either way, the source of the recording should be explained in the logbook. It's important that the words are fully integrated into the music and the mood reflects the words; compositions where the student creates a soundscape, then merely reads the poem over the top rarely receive much credit.

For brief 2, can the candidate adapt and re-order the words?

The whole poem need not be used or you may add some extra phrases to the poem. The question paper does say, "You may adapt or reorder the words." However, remember that the use of the stimulus and how it is developed is part of the assessment so the poem must form an integral part of the composition. Therefore candidates should not write an entirely new set of lyrics. The mood of the music should reflect the meaning of the words.

Can candidates use loops and third-party samples in their compositions?

Yes. The brief states: "Samples and loops must be manipulated in order to gain credit... The source of any samples that you have used must be credited in

your logbook." Therefore ensure that your candidates have referenced the source of the samples and how they've been edited.

Can one candidate get another candidate to perform on their composition, e.g. a guitar solo?

Yes. The performer and the composer of the part that the performer is playing must be credited in the logbook on page 5. The logbook must state how the performance was directed, e.g. whether a guitar solo was improvised. A new requirement for 2022 is that the performers names must be given in the logbook.

Should candidates master their recordings?

Yes. Mastering is in the specification, topic 1.14.

Can candidates word process their logbooks?

Yes. It is preferred for candidates to word process their logbooks. Candidates must keep to the order of the "questions" and layout of the published logs, including the tables. It is very important that the examiners can find the information that they need quickly in a standardised way when assessing the work. Sometimes candidates submit logbooks with pages and pages of unlabelled A4 screenshots; these are of little use because it is impossible to fathom what the screenshots relate to.

Does the composition need to be exactly 3 minutes?

Compositions should be 3:00 exactly because that's what the brief and mark scheme state. Compositions under or over length will have a mark adjustment as can be seen in the mark scheme because the candidate hasn't fulfilled the brief. In the professional environment, it's often the case that music has to be made to strict timings, so this qualification is preparing students for that. This timing would include any reverb or effects tail. This timing would be the file length as long as there are gaps of less than a second at the top and tail.